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NEWS

Helpers Among Us — ABC House

JOYCE WESTNER | STAFF WRITER

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Amanda Lewis, president of WABC, and Sam Cruz, WABC scholar, at the Class of 2021 graduation ceremonies. Cruz is now attending Clark University. COURTESY PHOTO/AMANDA LEWIS

In a 100-year-old grey colonial house on Dix Street lives a group of Winchester High School boys from other parts of the country. P

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who've raised teenagers may blanch at the thought of seven strapping young men in one household, but this is a special place.

The ABC House, as it's called, is part of a nationwide program, "A Better Chance," one of 21 similar school programs, which seeks to "increase the number of well-educated young people of color who are capable of assuming positions of responsibility and leadership in American society," according to its website.

ABC House on Dix Street serves a group of Winchester High School boys from other parts of the country. COURTESY PHOTO/AMANDA LEWIS

And the helpers are legion, none more dedicated to its success th
of Directors President Amanda Lewis, although the list of helpers

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and includes over 50 residents, including Select Board Member Anthea Brady and various tutors and host families.

When your reporter spoke with Lewis, she was eager to mention their yearly fundraiser, “The Dream,” which was held at the Sanborn House on April 27.

“It really is about dreams,” she said, “about young men and their families who dream about a college education.”

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High School senior Devon Headley, from Brooklyn, N.Y., has this to say about the program: “ABC has profoundly impacted my life in many positive ways. ABC has provided numerous resources for me, such as mentorships and educational support that aided my academic success. It also opened me to new perspectives through experiences, such as building a school in Honduras for kids in poverty.

“It helped me develop a great appreciation for community service, locally and globally,” he added. “I am very thankful to be a WABC scholar as it has become a part of my identity, which I will never forget.”

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WABC Scholar Joel Aryee, now a sophomore, but arriving as a freshman in this photo with his proud family. COURTESY PHOTO/AMANDA LEWIS

That sentiment is echoed by senior Waldo Vasquez from Connecticut.

“Winchester ABC has changed who I am as a person,” he said. “I’ve been welcomed, accepted, and supported by so many people in the community. I’ve become independent and have learned how and when to ask for help. I’m sad that my time here is coming to an end, but I’m excited about what awaits me. I’m forever grateful.”

The program’s chief goal is to provide the sort of high school education most likely to get kids into college, and Winchester High is not or

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the top-rated schools in the Commonwealth, but it also offers a variety of sports and clubs.

Families in Winchester host ABC scholars as a four-year commitment. Each scholar is paired with a family and spends time at the family's home on Sundays and one weekend a month. In this photo, ABC Alum Ibny Crookson goes to the theater to see 'Hamilton' with his host family, the Ihrigs. COURTESY PHOTO/AMANDA LEWIS

Lewis has been involved at ABC for eight years and she's done a lot of volunteer work in the schools, is a former Swim Winchester president, and organized a multi-cultural fair at Muraco Elementary School. While with ABC, she helped find boys enrichment programs that aligned with their interests and she was director of student life, which was more about the social and emotional aspect of their stay.

Wilson Street resident Lewis has a day job, too, as managing editor of Pangyrus, an online literary magazine, plus she's a literary agent.

"I'm not officially retired — yet," she said.

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Rep. Michael Day helps House colleagues pass sweeping energy affordability bill

The following was submitted by the Office of Rep. Michael S. Day: Rep. Michael S. Day and his colleagues in the House of Representatives recently passed energy affordability legislation that would result in over $9 billion in savings for utility ratepayers over the next 10 years. The bill maintains critical

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Winchester gun owners face new training rules starting April 2

Public safety data How Winchester compares on firearms licenses in comparable Massachusetts communities Active licenses as of Jan. 25, 2025 — Source: Massachusetts Criminal History Systems Board License to carry firearms Firearms identification card Winchester and Marblehead are the focus communities. Peers selected based on comparable population size, demographics and suburban

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Sen. Jason Lewis, Mass. Senate strengthen fair housing protections for renters, buyers

The following was submitted by the Office of Sen. Jason Lewis: State Sen. Jason Lewis joined his colleagues in the Massachusetts Senate to pass legislation that protects residents from discrimination in the housing market as the Trump administration abandons its enforcement of the federal Fair Housing Act. Illegal discrimination continues

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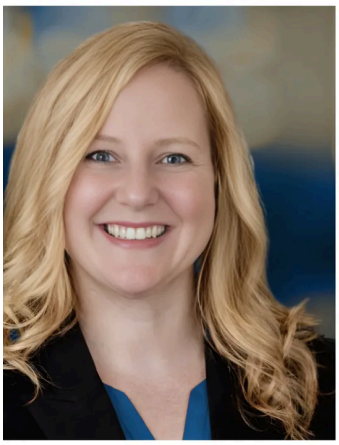

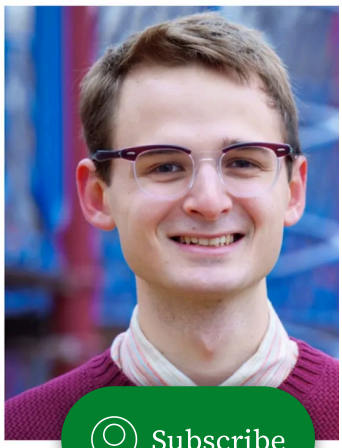

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Celebrate Women's History Month with Girls Leading Change

The following was submitted by the Network for Social Justice: To mark Women's History Month and International Women's Day in 2026, the Network for Social Justice is collaborating with club leaders from Winchester High School and members of the Community Health team from La Colaborativa in Chelsea and

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Winchester School Committee candidates bring contrasting backgrounds to Thursday forum

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'Chicago: Teen Edition' dances onto the Winchester High School stage

By Talia Ho | Correspondent Fame. Fortune. And all that jazz. This spring, Winchester High School presents "Chicago: Teen Edition," a bold musical that explores celebrity culture, media manipulation, and the cost of ambition. This iconic production is set in the 1920s. Performances will take place on March 13 and 14

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Ripley Chapel in Winchester presents 'Syldason: You Are Welcome Here'

The following was submitted by the Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church: On Friday, March 13, beginning at 7:30 p.m., live in-person and live streamed from the stunning Ripley Chapel at First Congregational Church, Winchester, 21 Church St., join in with Syldason, a duo concert featuring Sylvie Zakarian,

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